

Paul in Prison at Philippi Acts 16:25-34

Introduction:

This story that we have recorded in Acts 16 can teach us many different things. One of the prominent lessons is that all things work out for good when we put our faith in Christ. Even though Paul is in prison, he keeps his faith in God. Because of that, the jailer is given the opportunity to obey the gospel.

It is our aim and prayer that, by looking at this story from the life of Paul, we may have that encouragement to continue the work of the Lord. Remember **Rom. 8:28** - **And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.**

Today, we will notice the setting of this story, which will help us to understand that things do work out when we put our faith in God. We will also notice how the faith of Paul resulted in the conversion of this jailer.

I. Notice the setting of this story (16:6-24).

- A. The setting of this story and conversion will help us to understand the situation that Paul and Silas are in.
- B. Paul has just seen a vision (16:6-10).
 - 1. A man from Macedonia pleaded with Paul to help them in Macedonia.
 - 2. Paul determined that this was a vision from God, so he went to Macedonia.
- C. As Paul comes into the city of Philippi, he is able to talk with and convert Lydia (16:11-15).
 - 1. Paul went **“to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made”** (16:13).
 - 2. It was at the riverside that they met Lydia and converted her household (16:14-15).
 - 3. She begged Paul and those with him to stay with her, and so they did (16:15).
- D. Following this conversion, Paul is thrown into prison (16:16-24).
 - 1. As Paul continued in the city, there was a girl who had **“a spirit of divination”** (16:16).
 - 2. She followed Paul and prophesied about him (16:17).
 - 3. After many days, Paul cast this spirit out because he was greatly annoyed at her (16:18).
 - 4. When her masters saw that there was no longer an opportunity to make money from her, they turned the city against Paul (16:19-24).
 - 5. Paul and Silas were beaten and thrown into prison to be kept securely.
- E. All of this leads up to the great conversion of the Philippian jailer.

II. The most important lesson that we could learn from this story is that if we are faithful to Christ, things will work out for the good.

- A. Remember the situation that Paul is in.
 - 1. He just began preaching in Macedonia and has converted the household of Lydia.
 - 2. Now he has been thrown into prison because he removed the spirit from the girl and now the masters of that girl cannot make money off of her.
 - 3. Paul is in prison simply for doing the work of the Lord.
- B. Sometimes bad things happen to good people.
 - 1. It would have been easy for Paul and Silas to begin to feel sorry for themselves.
 - 2. However, Paul and Silas were “praying and singing hymns to God” at midnight (16:25).
 - 3. Instead of sulking about what was happening, they were praising God.
 - 4. Acts 5:41 - So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.
 - 5. Paul kept his faith in God even when he was in prison; and because of this, he had the opportunity to teach someone about Christ.
- C. We must remember to keep our faith in God.
 - 1. Remember what Paul did when the earthquake occurred (16:26-28).
 - a. Paul and Silas could have escaped at that time.
 - b. Instead, because of their faith, they remained in the prison, and even saved the life of the jailer.
 - 2. God never promised us an easy life.
 - 3. Sometimes things happen that are beyond our control.
 - 4. The key for us to learn is to make the best of a bad situation.
 - a. Even though Paul was in prison, he never stopped preaching the gospel (16:25).
 - b. If we have faith in God, all things will work out for good.
 - c. Rom. 8:28 - And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.
 - d. The important thing is not what happens to us, but how we handle the situation.
 - e. We may not be able to control our circumstances, but we can control how we react to them.

III. The ultimate question from the jailor: "What must I do to be saved?"

- A. This question is the most important question that we could ask.
 - 1. Acts 2:37 - Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"
 - 2. Acts 9:6 - So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" And the Lord said to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."
 - 3. We also, at some point, must ask the same question.
- B. Paul told the jailer that to "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household" (16:31).
 - 1. Notice the answer on the Day of Pentecost: Acts 2:38 - Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."
 - 2. Why was this answer different than the answer that Peter gave on the Day of Pentecost?
 - a. The people were at different places.
 - b. After the sermon by Peter, those on the Day of Pentecost already believed that Jesus was the Son of God.
 - c. This jailer had little knowledge of Jesus.
 - d. It is important to note that this jailer was later told to be baptized.
- C. Some in denominations will use this passage to justify faith only, but they refuse to look at the rest of the passage (16:32-34).
 - 1. Paul and Silas proceeded to speak "the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house" (16:32).
 - 2. The jailer took them that same hour and washed their stripes (16:33).
 - 3. Immediately, Paul took him and baptized him and his whole family (16:33).
 - 4. The man then set food before Paul and Silas (16:34).
 - 5. It was only after this that the man could rejoice (16:34).
 - 6. He rejoiced because he believed in God.
- D. When we believe in something, we will act on that belief.
 - 1. For this jailer to truly believe, he had to act on this belief.
 - 2. Obviously, part of believing in God is being baptized, because this is what the jailer did IMMEDIATELY (16:33).
 - 3. We also, today, must act on our faith.

Conclusion:

We must always keep our faith in God. If we do, we know that everything will work out for the best. If we are faithful to God, we also have a home in heaven with Him for eternity.